DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 302 127 HE 022 019

AUTHOR Akis, Zehra Sevgin
TITLE Economic Education at Turkish Universities. World Education Monograph Series. Number Three.
INSTITUTION Connecticut Univ., Storrs. Thut (I.N.) World Education Center.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-918158-909
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 18p.; Summary of presentation at World Education Colloquium Series (1987-1988), sponsored by the Thut World Education Center and the World Education Fellowship, Connecticut Chapter.
AVAILABLE FROM Isaac N. Thut World Education Center, Box U-93, School of Education, The University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06268.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Business Education; Consumer Education; Developing Nations; Economic Development; *Economics Education; Educational Improvement; *Educational Quality; Higher Education
IDENTIFIERS *Turkey

ABSTRACT

The progress of Turkish institutions of higher learning as such progress relates to economics or commercial education is described. The presentation is by a visiting Turkish scholar at the Thut World Education Center. The content of Turkish economic education is cited with some of its theoretical problems identified. Various methodological and technical issues that are encountered in practice are noted, and questions are raised about improvements in the quality of economic education in Turkey, even though the number of faculty members of economic studies has increased. It is noted that the progress of economics as a social science in Turkey has been historically delayed and is a dependent one. A general evaluation of the traditional theory of economics is given to help assess the content of Turkish economic education. Three main points to address when organizing programs of economic education in Turkey are: (1) the Turkish economy should be considered and analyzed with particular attention; (2) the Turkish economy and the entire science of economics must be analyzed from an historical perspective; and (3) abstract mathematical analysis should be utilized only in so far as it does not veil the actual economic problems of Turkey. Some of the factors limiting the quality of economic education in Turkey are the crowded classrooms, lack of well-written textbooks, insufficient research, and outdated instructional methods. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED302127

ISBN 0-918158-909

THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

ECONOMIC EDUCATION AT TURKISH UNIVERSITIES

Zehra Sevgin Akış

1987-1988
World Education Monograph Series
Number Three

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
The Isaac N. Thut World Education Center, Univ. of Connecticut
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

THE ISAAC N. THUT WORLD EDUCATION CENTER
CENTRO DE EDUCACIÓN MUNDIAL ISAAC N. THUT
Box U-93, School of Education
The University of Connecticut
Storrs, CT 06268 U.S.A.
(203) 486-4812

1988

HE 022 019

FOREWORD

During the 1987-1988 academic year Dr. Zehra Sevgin Akış, a young economic educator from Turkey, has been the Visiting Scholar at The Isaac N. Thut World Education Center. Tarsus, Turkey is Sevgin Akış' hometown and she is a graduate of The University of the Bosphorus in business administration and earned her doctorate in economics at the University of Istanbul. Her post-doctoral year in the United States was made possible by a grant from the Sabancı Foundation of Istanbul, Turkey.

Dr. Akış' parents are both lifelong professional teachers in Turkey, so she comes from a family that has long been interested in education. This year she has made field trips to Baltimore, Maryland in order to attend the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting, Chicago, Illinois for an economics conference, and Austin, Texas to visit the Middle East Center of the University of Texas. Dr. Akış has observed economic education classes in a half dozen Connecticut high schools as part of an inquiry that she is conducting concerning economic education in our state. She is also developing a unit of instructional materials about the economy of modern Turkey for use in American secondary schools. Sevgin Akış has been invited to speak at Ellington and Enfield High Schools, and Trinity College, Hartford, as well as giving this colloquium at The University of Connecticut.

This summary of Dr. Akış' colloquium presentation for the World Education Colloquium Series of 1987-1988 is one of six programs jointly sponsored by The Isaac N. Thut World Education Center and The World Education Fellowship, Connecticut Chapter (WEFCONN). The monographs based on these programs include:

1. Timothy Reagan, *The Language Struggle in South Africa: Emergence and Development in Educational Policy.*
2. Richard F. Elias, *A Year as an Educator in Northeast China.*
3. Zehra Sevgin Akış, *Economic Education at Turkish Universities.*
4. Lydia Smith, *The Impact of British Open Education on Americans in the 1970's.*
5. William W. Jellema, *China and Its Universities.*
6. Vernon L. Phelps, *Traditional and Adaptive Education among the Hutterites: Controlled Acculturation.*

Copies of these, and earlier issues of the World Education Monograph Series may be obtained by contacting The Isaac N. Thut World Education Center.

Frank A. Stone
General Editor
World Education Monograph Series

ECONOMIC EDUCATION AT TURKISH UNIVERSITIES

Zehra Sevgin Akış

Introduction

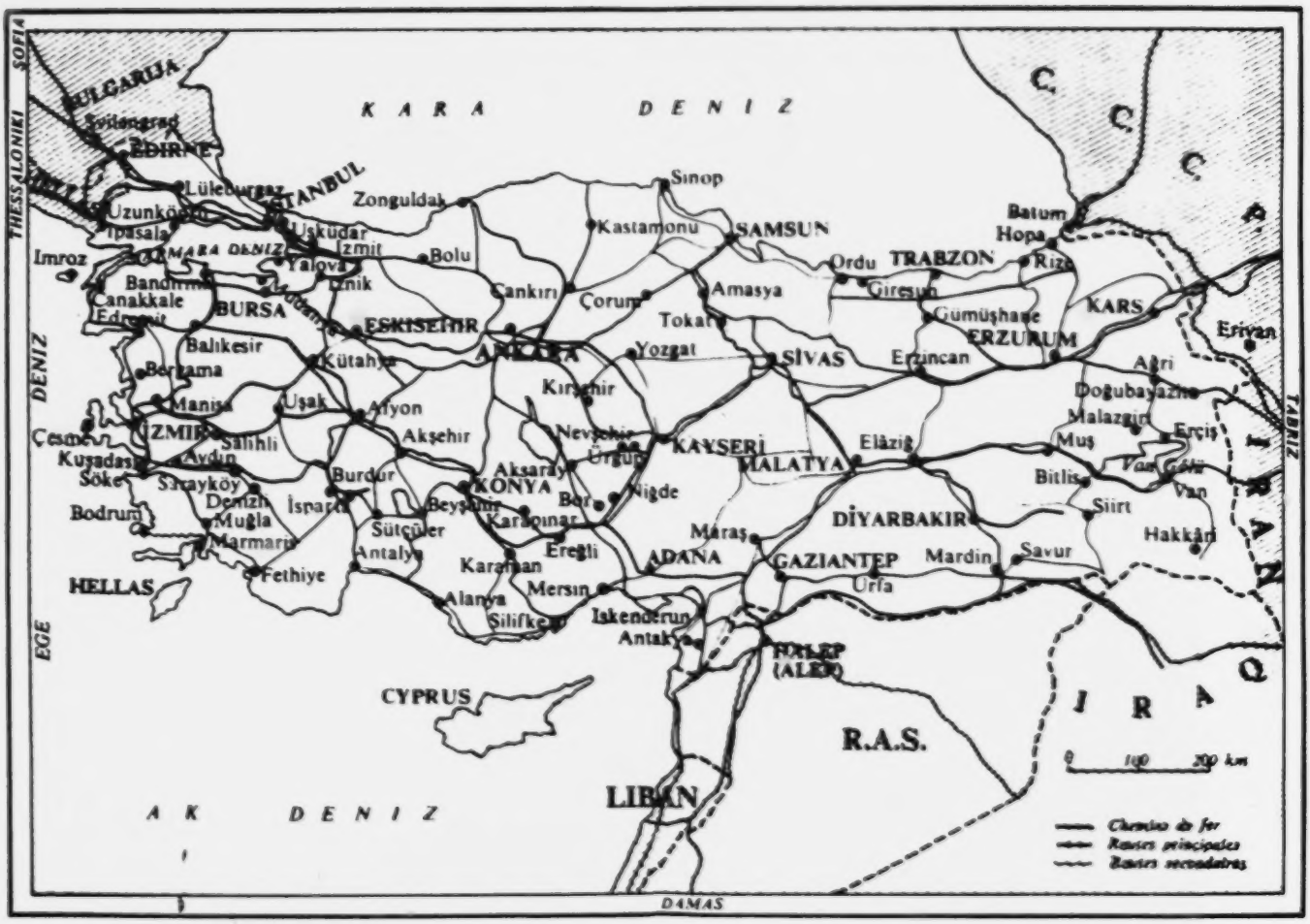
The interest shown toward economic subjects in Turkey has increased enormously during the last ten to fifteen years. The great masses of the people started searching for the reasons why their standard of living was declining on the economic level. So the economic aspects of political discussions also started to gain more importance. The relatively increased weight being given to economic problems by the daily newspapers in Turkey, as well as an increase in the number of economic books, bulletins, and periodicals in the country can be taken as indicators of this progress. The preferences of the students who register for the necessary entrance examinations in order to be admitted to a university are yet another indicator of the growing interest in economics as an academic discipline in Turkey.

It is necessary to indicate immediately, however, that this growing public interest in economic subjects does not give us any idea about the quality of Turkish economic education, or identify the problems in this field of study. It is traditional to discuss the problems of all of the social sciences in the developed countries. One considers the problems of economic education both from the point of view of public opinion and also within academia. Here in the United States, for example, the subject of economic education is discussed in a separate session at the annual meetings of the American Economic Association. The same association has published *The Journal of Economic Education* twice a year since 1970. Whereas in Turkey, no particular importance has been given to this topic over many long years. So far as I know, an anthology of collected articles edited by a professor at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara which was published in 1972 is the only systematic study about this field prepared in Turkey.[1] Recently, two Turkish scholarly journals, namely *The Journal of Economics (Iktisat Dergisi)*, which is published by the Society of the Graduates of Istanbul University, and the periodical of the Middle East Technical University called *Studies in Development (ODTÜ Gelişme Dergisi)* have also given some importance to this subject.[2]

By making use of these resources, first, I am going to try to give you some general information about the progress of Turkish institutions of higher learning that are related to economics or commercial education, in so far as they are germane to our subject. Then, secondly, within the traditional theory of economics, I am going to mention the content of Turkish economic education and identify some of its theoretical problems. Finally, I plan to deal with some methodological and technical issues that are encountered in practice.

MAP ONE

THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY



Source: *Nagel's Encyclopedia - Guide, Turkey.*
Geneva: Nagel Publishers, 1984, inside the front cover.

The Progress of Turkish Institutions of Economic and Commercial Education

Although they have been trying to teach economics and also to give commercial education in Turkey for more than a hundred years, it is difficult to locate any investigations of this subject for the years before 1920. This can be explained because people started to give more importance to economic problems, and consequently to economic and commercial education especially after the Turkish War for Independence (1921-1923). During the fiery days of the struggle for independence, because of the difficulties caused by the war itself, and at the same time, the necessity of training Turkish merchants in order to fill the places of the minority groups who had previously been responsible for the country's economic affairs, it became necessary to develop an economic education policy. Both the internal and the external conditions of the time, however, hampered carrying out such a radical reformation. An Economic Congress was held in Izmir at the beginning of the year 1923. At this meeting, AtatÜrk explained the importance of solving the nation's economic problems, but he didn't insist very much on the necessity of carrying out economic reforms. In other words, "laissez fair" policies were accepted as the rule in the economy, and were given emphasis when social and cultural reforms were subsequently carried out.

Naturally this kind of an economic structure affected the basic principles of Turkish economic education. Generally, this field was fitted into the broader structure of educational reforms aimed at modernizing the country. For this purpose, at all kinds of higher educational institutions, economic and commercial studies were modified in order to train people to adopt a western type of economic model. This aim can be seen clearly in the reports of the foreign experts who were invited to Turkey in order to contribute to the formation of the new educational system under the Republic.

Most of these experts based their recommendations on the educational systems of various western countries, which they assumed would be appropriate models for the development of Turkey. According to the report of Professor John Dewey, for example, who came to Turkey from Columbia University in the summer of 1924, the Danish type of economic education would be the best one for Turkey.[3] Similarly, the consultant from the German Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Professor Kühne, who visited Turkey in 1925, proposed that "Business Administration Theory" be taught in the Turkish Higher Commercial Schools, just as it was in Germany.[4]

There were only three institutions of economic and commercial higher education which the Turkish Republic took over from the Ottoman Empire. There was a Higher Commercial School named the "Âli Ticaret Mektebi," the Law School which belonged to the original Ottoman University "DarÜlfÜnun," and the School of Political Sciences named "Mekteb-i Mülkiye." Apart

from these institutions, some economics was also being taught in the Agricultural School and the School of Engineering. After the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, immediate changes were made in the educational programs of these institutions, with special emphasis placed on improving economic and commercial education.

The economic problems which started with a balance of payments deficit in the late 1920's forced the authorities to put greater emphasis on economic education. Besides, the economic depression of the western world, which the young Turkish Republic had adopted as its economic model, after 1929 required them to do so. A Consultative Committee (Âli Danışma Meclisi) had been formed in 1927 in order to look for solutions to these problems. Most of its members were economists. But although they issued some reports that roughly defined the nation's economic problems, this committee couldn't be effective. The Association of National Economy and Savings (Milli Iktisat ve Tasarruf Cemiyeti) was formed in 1929. It was the proposal of this group to concentrate on national savings and industry. It cannot be claimed to have been very successful in achieving its aims, either. It was this association, however, that caused economics to be diffused in Turkey as a social science. The graduates of the Higher School of Economics (Âli Iktisat Mektebi Mezunları Cemiyeti) started to publish a periodical named *The Economist (Iktisatçi)* in the same year. The emergence of this publication can now be recognized as an important indication that there was a rising demand for economists in Turkey.

A new political party was formed in 1930 under the name of the Free Party (Serbest Firka), as a result of reactions to the liberal economic policies which were applied during the period between 1923 and 1929. Economic critiques made by the members of this party paved the way for some new but rough proposals regarding educational policies. According to the educational understanding of the party stalwarts, it would be better to teach economics in practice than to give formal instruction about it in schools. During the same period, a lot of authorities in Turkey were also concerned with educational problems. Muhlis Ete, for example, who was an assistant to the professor at the Darülfünun, published many articles in different periodicals. Ete's views were given in many different places such as *The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Review (Istanbul Ticaret ve Sanayii Odasi Dergisi), School of Law Review (Hukuk Fakültesi Mecmuasi), The Economist (Iktisatçi), Ideal (Ülkü), and The School of Political Sciences Review (Mülkiye)*. He was one of the first people in Turkey who systematically analyzed the necessity of directing Turkish economic and commercial education along free enterprise lines.

The Turkish policy makers adopted a new model called "etatism" (devletçilik) in 1929. Their motives were to help the nation recover from the worldwide economic depression and to contribute to the development

of Turkey's productive capacity. This economic orientation involves a high degree of state participation in the economy. Both the period of transition into etatism (1929-1931), and the ensuing era when etatism was the official national policy are important because of the discussions about economic education that took place during them.

Ismail Hüsrev Tökin was another Turkish intellectual who analyzed the national problems related to economic education at this time. He collected his articles which he had written in 1930 for a newspaper called *Sovereignty Belongs to the People (Hakimiyet-i Milliye)* and elaborated on them in order to produce a book titled *How Must Economics be Taught? (Iktisat Nasil Okutulmalidir?*, Ankara, 1931). The formation of the Society of Turkish Economists (Türk Iktisatçılar Cemiyeti) in Istanbul was another important event of the year 1931.

The most important discussions about economic education during this period, however, started with the publication of a new periodical named *Cadre (Kadro)*. The writers of this periodical were the fiery advocates of etatism. They criticized the professors of Darülfünun who didn't appreciate their etatist ideology. Moreover, they carried on propaganda for social liberalism. Although these writers were successful in showing the insufficiencies of the economic education of that era, they were unable to systematize a new model to replace it.

The indifferent and rather passive manner of the professors at the University (Darülfünun) after 1925 had started to attract the attention of the government officials. After 1930 their lack of rigor was much criticized. So the Turkish government authorities approved the annual budget of the University for the year 1932 only on condition that radical reforms be made. Professor Albert Malsche from Geneva University, Switzerland, was brought to Turkey to prescribe the needed changes. The government authorities then enacted a law based on his report and recommendations in 1933. The old "Darülfünun" was terminated, and the law charged the Ministry of National Education with the task of establishing a new institution under the name of Istanbul University. After studies had been made by the Commission appointed by the Ministry for this purpose, another law was enacted in 1934 actually forming the new institution. Although the School of Political Sciences (Mekteb-i Mülkiye) in Ankara was also under the control of the Ministry of National Education, it was exempted from the changes that were instituted during this reform.

An unexpected event happened in the mid-1930's causing a group of foreign professors (mostly Germans) who were refugees from the Nazi oppression in their homeland to come to Istanbul. Due to having been exiled from Germany, four of these German professors started to teach in the economics department of the Law Faculty at Istanbul University.

The first step toward improving economic education was the establishment of the Economics and Sociology Institute (Iktisat ve Içtimatiyat Enstitüsü). The aim of this new organization was to organize yearly courses and seminars for the senior students and graduates of the Law Faculty. After a short period of practice, however, it became evident that these courses and seminars were not sufficient to produce a high quality economic education. Consequently the academicians decided to form an independent Faculty of Economics. They established it at the end of 1936. Naturally, the economic policy of the period affected the aims of this new faculty. The main objective for the esblishment of the new faculty, in other words, was to prepare economists for the public sector rather than for jobs in private corporations. Later, after changes had been made in the national policy, this aim of the Faculty of Economics would also be altered.

Most of the courses were related with the law, in the beginning, because of the broad definition of "economist" being used. Also, there was a lack of sufficient qualified professors. Thirty-six percent of the total number of courses taught were about law. Despite these problems, this period of economic education was rather fruitful due to the presence of the foreign professors. Their knowledge about economics resulted in the publication of new textbooks and periodicals, as well as lots of seminars being organized on a variety of topics.

Meanwhile, the School of Political Sciences in Ankara, which had been able to maintain its continuity during the university reform because of its close relationships with the bureaucracy, continued to profit. Its name was changed by Atatürk in 1934 from "Mekteb-i Mülkiye" to "Siyasal Bilgiler Okulu" which conveys the same meaning, Political Sciences School, in pure Turkish. (Later, before the elections of 1950, it became a full-fledged faculty of Ankara University.) In 1935, however, in order to provide the school with a new residence which would be located near to the bureaucratic center of the country, construction was started on new buildings in the Cebeci section of Ankara. By a legislative enactment passed the same year, the number of its professors was greatly increased and their salaries raised. According to the same legislation, three-fourths of the School's graduates were obligated to work in the Ministry of Finance. The educational program of the School, however, wasn't revised at this time.

During Turkey's etatist period improving commercial education was also considered. Aiming at reforming commercial education in order to better meet the needs of the coutry, it was proposed to concentrate this type of education in one center and then to establish some new commercial academies. Some changes were also made in the structure of the Higher Commercial School (Âli Ticaret Mektebi). It cannot be claimed, however, that these changes were sufficient to solve the long-term educational problems of producing a new generation of competent merchants and traders.

Etatism as a theory and practice began to decline in popularity and effectiveness between the years 1937 and 1939. In spite of the immense

interference caused by the Second World War (1940-1944), free enterprise became stronger in Turkey and capital accumulation increased rapidly with little government control. The establishment of a second Higher Commercial School (Iktisat Ticaret Yüksek Mektebi) in Izmir in 1944, during the most critical days of the war, can be seen to have been an indication of the development of the private sector. The education program of the Faculty of Economics at Istanbul University was changed during the same years by increasing the number of economics courses and the number of times that the courses on administrative economics would meet.

Etatism was being eliminated during the period between 1945 and 1950. As Turkey's economic structure changed, the general programs of education in the country were also altered. Three of the changes made at this time are especially important for determining the basic characteristics of the educational policy. The first is the law enacted in 1946 in order to reorganize the nation's universities. According to its provisions, the "civil servant" status that university professors had previously been given was eliminated. The aim of this provision was to protect the university personnel against oppression and possible intervention by government officials. A short time after the new law was enacted, however, most of the professors at the Faculty of Language, History, and Geography in Ankara (Ankara Dil ve Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi) were summarily fired. Their sudden dismissal is the second important event of the period from the perspective of evolving educational policy. It clearly demonstrated that the academic autonomy of the universities was limited by the political power of the government authorities. The third event was the formation of the Educational Committee of the United States within a new Turkish American agreement in 1949. Due to this accord, the influence of the United States on the Turkish educational system, which had started in 1945, now became widespread.

The application of more liberal economic policies between the years 1950 and 1960, due to a change in the political party in power, at first accelerated the pace of Turkey's economic development. Excessive government expenditures and erratic investments, however, caused inflation and consequently an economic depression in 1958. In order to suppress the reactions, some preventative measures were taken in the nation's educational policies, including the area of economic education. A new law was enacted in 1953, for example, prohibiting university professors from actively participating in political institutions, Naturally, this prohibition largely kept the professors - especially in the social sciences fields - from paying much attention to national problems. Under these circumstances, the only possibility for Turkish professors of economics was to quote the Anglo-Saxon (western) theories of economics without taking much into consideration their appliability to the conditions in Turkey. Thus, during this period, the role of the universities in the socio-political life of the country was very limited. Towards the end of the period, the universities started to establish new related institutions which were directly patterned on and applied the same methods as those in western societies.

The first of these was the Administrative Economics Institute (Işletme Iktisadi Enstitüsü) which was formed in 1954 within the framework of Istanbul University with enormous suppor from the Ford Foundation. Then, especially after 1956, the Turkish government began establishing new universities along western lines. The Aegean University (Ege Üniversitesi) near Izmir, the Black Sea Technical University (Karadeniz Teknik Üniversitesi) at Trabzon, Atatürk University in Erzurum, and Hacettepe University in Ankara are examples of these western type universities.

Within this context of educational development, the Middle East Technical University (Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi) in Ankara, and Robert College, Bebek, Istanbul, which in 1971 was turned into the University of the Bosphorus, are especially important. At both of these universities all of the classes are conducted in English. They therefore have a widespread reputation for excellence, particularly in the Administrative and Economic Sciences. A great deal of foreign aid was received for the establishment of the Middle East Technical University, which became operative in 1957. It had been thought that with the founding of METU, Ankara would become an important cultural center, not only for Turkey, but also for the entire Middle East. On the other hand, Robert College, which had originally been a secondary school sponsored by Americans, became a higher academy with the enactment of a regulation by the Council of Ministers in 1957. The logic for this decision was reducing Turkey's foreign exchange payments for students who were going abroad in order to study at American universities. Later, however, the ideological foundations of both of these new English-language universities were discussed widely in the mass media that influence public opinion in Turkey. Commentators stated that it had not been by happenstance, but actually according to ideological preference, that the first faculties put into operation were those of the Administrative and Economic Sciences.

The Higher Commercial Schools (Yüksek Iktisat ve Ticaret Mektepleri) were also supported during the period between 1950 and 1960. The number of academicians at these institutions was increased in 1952, and two new ones were established in Ankara and Eskişehir in 1955 and 1958 respectively. With the enactment of a new law in 1959 these institutions became higher academies.

Paralleling the student protests and movements in France, the United States, and Germany in the late 1960's, similar demonstrations also started to become widespread in Turkey. Between 1970 and 1980 the increased political activism of the Turkish university students caused large scale interruptions and blockages of the educational activities at universities in the country. Either the students themselves boycotted the classes, or the administrators had to close them down. Classes couldn't meet, for example, during the decade before 1980, 116 days at the Aegean University, 421 days at Istanbul University, and 1427 days at Ankara University.

The events of the late 1970's set the stage for military intervention in 1980. Immediately after this intervention, in 1981, a new higher education law went into effect. Within the framework of this new law, a Commission on Higher Education (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu) was established that is still functioning. The entire system of higher education in Turkey was radically changed with the enactment of this law for the first time since the reorganization of 1933. According to the perspective of the members of the new Commission on Higher Education, it was the autonomy of the universities gained by the laws that had been enacted after 1945 that caused some of them to be polarized between Leftist radicals and Rightist reactionaries. Along with this ideological cleavage among their faculties, the political movements of the students hindered education. So, with the new law, the autonomy of the universities was curtailed by forming a strong centralist structure.[5]

Reasoning that the total number of people in Turkey's rapidly growing population who have had a higher education is very low, the authorities greatly increased the enrollment quotas of the existing universities. At the same time, they changed the status of some other institutions of higher education, designating them as universities, just in order to be able to demonstrate that the number of university graduates in Turkey was being increased. After the latest reorganization, however, a large number of university professors handed in their resignations or took leaves of absence to teach overseas. So it is very questionable whether or not the quality of higher education has actually been improved.

The ratio of instructors to students is very low, nationwide. Under these conditions, most of the professors are kept very busy with lecturing and naturally they have little time for research. Also, whole faculties and departments may have only one or two fully qualified instructors who have doctorates in the field they are teaching. Some of the instructors at the newly designated universities are not, themselves, university graduates. Many have only undergraduate degrees. These conditions affect economic education along with most other disciplines.

In brief, then, as a result of the dominant mentality that puts more emphasis on quantity than quality, it is obvious that the number of faculties of economic sciences has increased. It is not at all clear, however, that the quality of economic education at Turkish universities has also been improved.

A General Evaluation of the Traditional Theory of Economics

The progress of economics as a social science in Turkey has been historically delayed and is a dependent one. The contents of the textbooks imply that economic education at Turkish universities is limited to the theory of "traditional economics." In order to assess the content of Turkish economic education, therefore, it is necessary to first explain what "traditional economic theory" means.

The theory of economics has been developed in the western countries, and was formed especially during their periods of capitalist development. So, originally the theory of economics was confined to the experiences of these developed countries. Consequently its aim was to explain their economic situations. Due to this, it is insufficient to interpret the different economic positions of various non-western countries. Meanwhile, the less developed countries such as Turkey were largely ignored. Despite this unavoidable reality, we do not have any other scientific theory of economics. It is indispensible, in other words, that we use the theoretical tools of analysis and diagnosis that come from traditional economics. The only thing that can and must be done is to use the theory and expand on it with a critical approach whenever it contradicts the realities that we observe.

What is economics? According to the introductory textbooks, economics is the study of the processes that distribute scarce and limited resources among the unlimited needs and wants of human beings in order to fulfill them. Within the framework of this definition, the primary units of analysis in every economy are the consumers and the producers. The theory explains the behavior of these basic units with the help of concepts such as relative prices, supply and demand curves. These curves which are constructed under definite assumptions, are being used in order to analyze both the internal equilibrium within the economy, and to compare its relations with other economies. The relations between these basic units are assumed to be universal. Traditionally, economic analysis has been divided into two fields: microeconomics and macroeconomics. Microeconomics focuses on disaggregated problems specific to individual units or subsectors of the economy. Macroeconomics, on the other hand, deals with the aggregate problems affecting the economy at large.

After this brief explanation, it can be asserted that the traditional theory of economics has three main attributes, although it is difficult to definitely separate each one from the others.

1. Basic production relations are unchangeable in the traditional theory.
2. The traditional theory is confined within definite societies and periods.
3. Intellectual interest has a special place in the traditional theory of economics.

The traditional theory depends on the assumption that the basic production relations in every society do not change. This means that the social structure is always the same. Income distribution, for example, is generally taken as a given in the traditional theory. To keep it out of the analysis means to assume that the social structure does not change at all. In order to demonstrate that the basic production relations are unchangeable, the main subject of economics is considered to be relations between goods, rather than among human beings. The advocates of the traditional theory explain this by claiming that economics is a positive science. Their approach, however, is the result of their tendency to assume that the basic production relations do not change. In this way, the attempt is made to portray the

differences of economic powers in the social area, like the differences observed in nature, as exogenous determinants.

The unchangeability of production relations is not an assumption that has existed from the very beginning of the economic theory. Especially during the period in which economic theory was being developed, there were no such assumptions. According to the economists who lived in the eras when the bougeoisie was in conflict with and struggled against the feudal society, and especially for Ricardo, the main goal of the economic policy was to find the rules that regulate the division of income among the social classes. Thus, the basic production relations were the main subject of the economic analysis.

Another aspect of the traditional economic analysis, as has been stated before, is its restriction to the economies of the western industrialized nations. During its whole history, traditional theory has been concerned only with the developed countries. It analyzed economic problems from their point of view. Indeed, the historic school of economists who opposed the traditional theory was developed in Germany, which during those periods was relatively underdeveloped.

Also, in our time the main goal of the traditional theory is to maintain the status quo and provide a basis for the economic policies which favor the developed countries. So it is very difficult to come up with solutions to the problems of underdevelopment using the same theoretical tools which have been worked out mainly in and for the affluent western countries.

Despite the fact that the traditional economic theory is oriented towards the concerns of the developed countries, it cannot be said to be successful even there. As in all kinds of sciences, also in the field of economics, there is a tendency to analyze the subjects that have no special features other than being intellectual concerns. This tendency accelarated after World War Two with the widespread application of mathematics by economists. Econometrics - which is the combination of mathematics, statistics, and the economic theory - as a sub-division of economics was developed in this period. Since then economists have been discussing many kinds of opinions on the pages of their specialized journals that are totally unrelated to the reality of economics. These debates, which contribute little to economic analysis, have come to be considered economics itself. This type of sophisticated but unrealistic material can be found abundantly in *Econometrica*, which is a publication of the Econometric Association.

What Must be the Aims (Content) of Turkish Economic Education?

How must the traditional economic theory be taught - which as has been shown is oriented toward the developed countries and at the same time based on theoretical abstractions - so that it helps the students to understand the concrete economic problems of Turkey? If it is accepted that the goal of economic education is analyzing the different economies within their socio-economic structures and historical dimensions, to explore the ways in which social problems have arisen, and to search for solutions in order to realize social aims; then it is necessary to pay attention to three main points when organizing programs of economic education in Turkey.

1. The Turkish economy should be considered as a separate case and analyzed with particular attention.
2. The Turkish economy and the entire science of economics must be analyzed from an historical perspective.
3. Abstract mathematical analysis should be utilized only in so far as it does not veil the actual economic problems of Turkey.

When we examine the educational programs of the different faculties of economics in Turkey, great similarities can be observed among them. They all teach introductory economics in the first year, which contains the basic subjects of micro- and macroeconomics. During the second year, the same topics are taught in a more detailed way. The other courses offered are mainly these: Economic History, Development Economics, International Economics, Money and Banking, Economic Planning, the Turkish Economy, and the History of Economic Thought. This description will be familiar to economic educators from any western society. The Turkish programs were not worked out after a detailed study of Turkey's socio-economic structure and processes. On the contrary, the content of economic education at Turkish universities today is very much the same as at the western institutions. Turkish academicians in this field simply transferred, translated, and adapted what they had studied overseas.

So, in order to realize the goals mentioned before, it is necessary to put more emphasis on the practical aspects of economic education. When we stress analyzing the Turkish economy separately, this does not mean that it isn't important to teach the principles and basic concepts of economic theory. When our aim is teaching the theoretical rules and processes of this discipline, it will be useful to choose related examples from the Turkish economy. When the aim is to teach the Turkish economy, itself, then the approach to that subject should be integral and inter-disciplinary.

It is also important to look at the subjects from an historical perspective, in order to grasp the reality. Courses on the History of Economic Thought can be very useful for giving the students a wider perspective if they relate economic thought in Turkey to that elsewhere in the world. Likewise, the students have to learn the structure of the

Turkish economy as it functions interdependently in the world economy and within an historical process. Emphasis must be placed on courses such as Agricultural Economics, Regional Economics, Income Distribution, Labor Economics, and Industrial Economics for this purpose.

Students who are immersed in econometrics and the mathematics oriented courses can easily conclude that these subjects aren't related to the economic problems of the society, but are merely intellectual gymnastics or purely academic studies. So it is especially important to be careful about the weight that is being given to these kinds of courses in the economic education programs.

What are the Technical Insufficiencies of Economic Education in Turkey?

Apart from the problems that arise because of the present content of the economic education, the technical concerns associated with this field can be classified into four groups.

The most important factor that limits the quality of economic education is very crowded classrooms. According to official data for the 1984-1985 academic year, there was a total of 12,214 students of economics at thirteen universities. Actually, sixty-three and three tenths percent of them - almost two-thirds - were enrolled at five universities. The total percentage of students who are studying economics in English - mainly at the faculties of Middle East Technical University and the University of the Bosphorus - is only eight and six tenths percent. Besides these students enrolled in formal programs at conventional universities, there are also 26,017 economics students in the Open University (Açiköğretim Fakültesi). Obviously in their case it is impossible to maintain a very rigorous program of studies. The quality of economic education in Turkey, in other words, neither satisfies the good students nor attracts the average ones. The classroom over-population requires giving objective type instead of essay examinations. It is very well known that the so-called objective tests are not the best way to evaluate a student's ability to solve problems and do critical thinking in a complex field such as economics. Similarly, it is very difficult to have much discussion when the university classrooms are so overcrowded.

By the way, in recent years the ratio of students to university professors has considerably increased. It is the expansion of enrollment quotas at the universities, and the resignation of professors - both due to low salaries, and as a protest against the reorganization of higher education - that are the causal factors in this case.

Textbooks are another important factor limiting the quality of economic education. Unfortunately there is not enough of a competitive atmosphere in Turkey to produce many original, well written textbooks. The textbooks written by the Turkish academicians are generally very similar to the western ones. They make use of the traditional economic theory on a large scale, and consequently the contents of these materials reflect the outlook and problems of the western countries almost exclusively.

Specialized textbooks in Turkey are often expensive and in short supply. At the faculties where the language of instruction is English, they simply use the original textbooks in English. These, of course, are very costly for the Turkish students to buy. If they try to rely on materials in the university libraries, the students encounter another problem. The library holdings aren't extensive enough and often the books available are out-of-date. This is another limitation on economic education in Turkey.

The third factor restricting the quality of economic education in Turkey is research activities. Important studies about the Turkish economy have been carried out in the last twenty years. Although most of these inquiries were done by foreign economists for international organizations such as the World Bank and OECD, quite a few of them were also done by Turkish economists, especially in the fields of economic history and manufacturing industry. Basic research about the Turkish economy on topics such as unemployment, income distribution, the agricultural sector, the informal sector, and inflation, however, are not yet sufficient either in quantity or quality.

Finally, the instructional methods, like the contents of the economic education programs, haven't been changed for many years. The instructors applied and still continue to apply the same method of simply telling the subjects to the students who are passively listening. The most striking feature of the system, in fact, is its being closed to the new instructional methods. Paradoxically, Turkish economic academicians don't pay much attention to new ways of teaching and learning being developed in other countries, although they have borrowed most of the content that they teach. Nor are pedagogical studies about economic education being done in Turkey.

As you all know, two of the basic means of modern instruction developed in other parts of the world are computers and video/T.V. The reason why these instructional technologies haven't been used extensively in Turkey may be explained as being due to the financial problems of the universities. The reason for not paying more attention to pedagogical research, however, can only be the lack of the necessary interest in this subject. We recognize that teaching ability isn't always the same thing as the ability to conduct research, yet it can be claimed that the lack of interest in finding out about the findings of educational research is also a key factor limiting the quality of economic education at Turkish universities.

So, in conclusion, I can say that economic education in Turkey has not been concentrated on the economic problems of the country. The basic technical problems of teaching economics effectively in Turkey are the result of the nation's general policies in higher education. It will therefore not be easy to solve them in the immediate future.

NOTES

1 Fikret Görün, editor, *Türkiye'de Universitelerde Okutulan Iktisat Üzerine. (Concerning the Economics Taught at Turkish Universities)* Ankara: Middle East Technical University Publications, 1972.

2 *Iktisat Dergesi (The Journal of Economics)*, No, 254, Istanbul, January, 1986; and *ODTU Gelişme Dergisi (METU Studies in Development)*, 14(1), Ankara: Middle East Technical University Publications, 1987.

3 John Dewey, *Türkiye Maarifi Hakkında Rapor*, 2. baski. Istanbul: 1952, see especially pp. 6 and 8-9.

4 See *Mesleki Terbiye'nin Inkişafına Dair Rapor.* Ankara: 1939.

5 *1981 Yükseköğretim Reformu ve iki Yıllık Uygulama Sonuçları. (The Higher Education Reform and the Results of Two Years of Its Implementation)* Ankara: Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu, 1983.